

Kuntsler Phone Said Tapped By N.Y. State Police in 1969

By Brian Donovan
and Knut Royce

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NEW YORK, Jan. 3—The New York State Police illegally tapped the telephone of activist attorney William Kunstler in 1969, Newsday has learned from two former state police investigators.

The tap was installed on Kunstler's phone in his home in Mamaroneck, N.Y., and remained in operation for at least several months, the sources said. Tape recordings were made of many of Kunstler's conversations, they said.

"It was quite a hush-hush job," according to one of the former investigators. "The order for it came down from division (state police headquarters in Albany), and the tapes were sent up there to be transcribed. We never saw any court order for it."

The sources said the Kunstler tap was installed and maintained by state police

assigned to Troop K headquarters. They said the job of changing the tapes usually was handled by investigators in the special services unit. One of the sources said he had listened to a tape of Kunstler talking to a relative.

The commander of Troop K at the time, C. Richard Samson, declined to confirm or deny the account. "If you've talked to people in a position to know, then that's it," said Samson, who is now retired.

In interviews, Kunstler and his wife said that about the same time the state police tap reportedly was in operation they had an electronics expert check both their home phone lines. They said the check produced evidence of taps on both lines but no indication of who had installed the devices.

Hugh Morrow, a spokesman for Vice President Rockefeller, who was governor in 1969, said: "To the best of Nelson Rockefeller's

knowledge, the state police never engaged in any illegal electronic surveillance or wiretap . . . If it happened, it was certainly without his knowledge."